

*Relationship between England
and Russia*

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Soviet Woman Athlete Convicted of Shoplifting

LONDON, Oct. 12 (AP).—Nina Ponomareva, Soviet Olympic discus champion, was convicted today of shoplifting five cheap hats from a London department store but was given an absolute discharge on payment of 3 guineas (\$8.32) costs. The athlete denied stealing the hats, testifying she bought them.

The verdict was handed down by Magistrate Clyde Wilson when Nina made a surprise appearance to answer the charges. She took the stand for 55 minutes and flatly denied stealing the hats. "I bought them," she said.

Nina's arrest on August 29 angered the Soviet authorities so much that they canceled the Soviet-British track and field meet in which she was to be competitor.

The Russians called the arrest a "dirty provocation."

Nina failed to show up in court on August 30 and Magistrate Wilson issued a warrant for her arrest. The hefty discus thrower disappeared, presumably into the Soviet Embassy which has diplomatic immunity. In giving his decision the magistrate said: "I realize the fallibility of human nature and

the fact that C. and A. Modes displayed there constitute a considerable temptation to a number of women. I think the interests of justice will be discharged if I discharge her absolutely on payment of 3 guineas costs."

He said he found the case against her proved.

Defense Counsel Mervyn Griffith-Jones indicated Nina had been in the Soviet Embassy ever since she failed to show in court August 30.

"She has in fact not been a free woman," he said.

Mr. Griffith-Jones indicated Nina would be returning to Russia at the "earliest possible moment." She is expected to go back, either by plane or by the Soviet ship Molotov leaving London later today.

Nina is a favorite for the 1956 Olympic woman's discus gold medal at Melbourne next month. She won the event in the 1952 Helsinki games under her maiden name of Nina Romaschkova.

The 27-year-old athlete, an attractive figure in a fawn raincoat, lipstick and a green blouse, said on the stand she had no religious beliefs and made an

affirmation she would tell the truth about the incidents of August 29.

She said she was married to a doctor, lived in Moscow where she is a school teacher and has a son, Sasha, 2½ years old. She said she never had been in trouble with the police before.

Nina testified she paid £1 (\$2.80) for four feather hats and got change from £1 for a red woolen hat.

The store detective, Miss Margaret Bolsen, testified earlier that Nina had not paid for the hats, which were produced as evidence.

Court Room Packed

The court room was packed and there were hundreds standing outside when today's hearing started. Miss Bolsen testified she began watching Nina when the Soviet athlete "looked all around her—looked furtively around her." She said she did not see Nina pay for the hats.

Another prosecution witness, Mrs. Ella Olive Hogg, a member of the store's staff, said she saw Nina put a red woolen hat in her left coat sleeve and then saw her pick up two bags with the hats between them, holding them to her side while she walked away from the counter.

Nina bent forward, her face pale, as she listened attentively to the testimony, through an interpreter. Mr. Griffiths-Jones, expressed to Magistrate Wilson Nina's "very sincere apologies for not surrendering" in the first place.

"She has not any understanding of our language or procedure; was appalled at the publicity in which she became involved and was most distressed about the whole matter," he said.

"She has now been advised and has accepted the advice given to her" and has voluntarily and of her own accord surrendered to the police and so she appears before you this morning. I hope, in these circumstances, you won't put it against her that she failed to surrender."

Two weeks ago the British government refused a Soviet request that the case be dropped and suggested that the famous woman athlete be brought to court.

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EX-116

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191 OCT 18 956

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Wash. News _____
Wash. Star *A. T. Hall* _____
N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
N. Y. Mirror _____
N. Y. Daily News _____
Daily Worker _____
The Worker _____
New Leader _____

Date *10-12-57*

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 Mr. Mohr _____
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 Mr. Rosen _____
 Mr. Tamm _____
 Mr. Nease _____
 Mr. Winterrowd _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Mr. Holloman _____
 Miss Gandy _____

Relationship between England and Russia

MR. BRANIGAN

(MINA)

LONDON--SOVIET DICS CHAMPION MINA PONOMAREVA ENDED SIX WEEKS OF HIDING IN THE SOVIET EMBASSY TODAY AND WAS PROMPTLY ARRESTED ON A SHOP-LIFTING CHARGE AND TAKEN TO MAGISTRATES COURT FOR TRIAL.

THE DOORS OF THE COURT WERE LOCKED ONCE THE FORMAL CHARGE WAS MADE. SHE WAS ACCUSED OF STEALING FIVE 90-CENT BARGAIN HATS FROM A LONDON DEPARTMENT STORE WHILE ON A SHOPPING TOUR LAST AUGUST WITH HER ATHLETIC RUSSIAN FRIENDS.

THER WAS NO ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENT SHE WOULD APPEAR IN COURT. ALERT REPORTERS FIRST NOTICED THE CHUNKY 27-YEAR-OLD MOTHER SITTING IN A REAR ROOM OF THE MARLBOROUGH STREET COURT, AWAITING TO APPEAR BEFORE MAGISTRATE CLYDE WILSON.

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MINA PONOMAREVA

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 Mr. Mason _____
 Mr. Mohr _____
 Mr. Parsons _____
 Mr. Rosen _____
 Mr. Tamm _____
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Relationship between England and Russia

W. BRANIGAN

(MINA)

LONDON--A CHARGE OF THEFT WAS PROVED TODAY AGAINST SOVIET DISCUS
 THROWER MINA PONOMAREVA, BUT SHE WAS DISCHARGED ON PAYMENT OF THREE
 GUINEAS (NINE DOLLARS) COSTS.

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WASHINGTON CITY NEWS SERVICE

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 Mr. Nichols _____
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 Mr. Mason _____
 Mr. Mohr _____
 Mr. Parsons _____
 Mr. Rosen _____
 Mr. Tamm _____
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ADD NINA, LONDON

A BRITISH COURT FOUND SOVIET DISCUS CHAMPION NINA PONOMAREVA GUILTY OF STEALING FIVE HATS FROM A LONDON SHOP. BUT IT FREED HER WITH PAYMENT OF LIGHT COURT COSTS TO PERMIT HER TO RETURN TO RUSSIA "AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT."

NINA PLEADED INNOCENT TO THE THEFT CHARGE, WHICH MOSCOW HAD SAID WAS A "PROVOCATION" DESIGNED TO EMBARRASS AN EMINENT ATHLETE.

HOWEVER, MAGISTRATE CLYDE WILSON, BEFORE WHOM SHE WAS TRIED IN JAMPACKED MARLBOROUGH STREET COURT, RULED THAT THE CHARGES OF SHOPLIFTING HAD BEEN PROVED AGAINST THE 27-YEAR-OLD MOSCOW SCHOOLTEACHER.

BUT, APPARENTLY MINDFUL OF INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS, HE RELEASED HER UNCONDITIONALLY ON PAYMENT OF THREE GUINEAS (NINE DOLLARS) COURT COSTS.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY MERVYN GRIFFITH-JONES SAID ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR NINA TO "RETURN TO RUSSIA AT THE EARLIEST MOMENT."

THE SOVIET SHIP MOLOTOV ALREADY HAD UP STEAM AT LONDON'S SURREY DOCKS IN PREPARATION FOR SAILING TONIGHT.

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Relationship between Russia & England

Britons Urge Bolshoi Ballet to Reconsider

LONDON, Sept. 24.—“All friends in Britain urge you to come”—that message was sent to the Bolshoi Theatre ballet company in Moscow as it considered cancelling its visit to Britain.

It was sent by the chairman and secretary of the British Soviet Friendship Society, John Platts-Mills and Pat Sloan. It said that cancellation could only please those who desire to worsen British-Soviet relations.

The famed ballet company, due to leave next week for Britain, had announced in a letter to Izvestia that it had put off the trip because of champion discus thrower Nina Ponomareva and the “case of the five hats.”

The Ponomareva incident concerns the arrest of a Soviet woman discus thrower in London recently when five cheap hats were alleged by a store to have been found in her shopping bag.

The telegram from the British society read:

“While understanding your anxiety Ponomareva incident we are terribly disturbed by today's news proposed cancellation British visit. All friends in Britain urge you to come. Cancellation can only please those who desire to worsen British Soviet relations.”

SPORTSMEN'S CALL

In a statement last night D. Curtis, general secretary of the British Workers' Sports Association, said: “The people in Britain have very

great sympathy for the Russian point of view in the way the case of Nina Ponomareva was handled, but by withdrawing their talent from the track and stage the Russians have done the cause of international understanding tremendous harm, and their strongest critics tremendous good.

“We look to the Soviet Union for a magnanimous reappraisal of the whole position in the interest of better understanding between nations.”

Mikhail Chulaki, director of the Bolshoi Theatre ballet company, said in Moscow that British government action to withdraw the shoplifting charges against Nina Ponomareva would provide the “guarantee” desired by the ballet before it goes to London.

But so long as the British Government failed to make efforts to settle that case, and so long as the 120-member company felt their personal safety in Britain was not guaranteed, the visit planned for Oct. 3 was “impossible.”

V. T. Stepanov, chief of the Soviet Ministry of Culture's foreign relations department, said that cancellation of the visit would be a great disappointment to the Bolshoi.

“They have spent a very great sum of money to prepare for the trip and members of the company gave up a month of their holidays for preparations,” he said.

EX-116

INDEXED - 45

NOT RECORDED
170 SEP 27 1956

Wash. Post and Times Herald _____
 Wash. News _____
 Wash. Star _____
 N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
 N. Y. Mirror _____
 N. Y. Daily News _____
 Daily Worker _____
 The Worker _____
 New Leader _____

Date SEP 25 1956

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61 SEP 28 1956 1-10

Mr. Tolson	
Mr. Nichols	
Mr. Boardman	
Mr. Belmont	
Mr. Mason	
Mr. Mohr	
Mr. Parsons	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Tamm	
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Mr. Winterrowd	
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Mr. Holloman	
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Relationship between England and Russia

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(RUSSIAN)

LONDON--RUSSIA ANGRILY BROKE OFF A PRE-OLYMPIC TRACK AND FIELD MEET WITH BRITAIN TODAY BECAUSE OF SHOPLIFTING CHARGES AGAINST ITS HAT-LOVING STAR WOMAN DISCUS THROWER.

SOVIET TEAM MANAGER KONSTANTINE KRUPIN ORDERED HIS TEAM OUT OF WHITE CITY STADIUM AFTER THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE REFUSED TO INTERVENE IN THE COURT CASE AGAINST 27-YEAR-OLD MME. NINA PONOMAREVA.

SHE WAS ARRESTED WEDNESDAY ON A CHARGE OF STEALING FIVE HATS WORTH \$4.65 FROM A LONDON BARGAIN BASEMENT.

SHE WAS BOOKED AT A POLICE STATION AND RELEASED IN CUSTODY OF SOVIET CONSUL GENERAL ALEXANDER STARTSEV. HE PROMISED TO PRODUCE HER IN COURT YESTERDAY, BUT NEITHER HE NOR SHE SHOWED UP.

THE CASE QUICKLY MUSHROOMED OUT OF ALL PROPORTIONS INTO A MINOR INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT. SCOTLAND YARD SENT OUT A "WANTED" ALARM FOR THE FINERY-LOVING RUSSIAN WOMAN ATHLETE AND POLICE WITH GUARD DOGS PATROLLED THE AREA AROUND THE SOVIET EMBASSY WHERE SHE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE TAKEN REFUGE.

SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS CONFERRED THIS MORNING WITH FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS IN AN ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTION IN MRS. PONOMAREVA'S CASE. THIS MOVE APPARENTLY FAILED, AND THE SOVIET TEAM WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SCHEDULED WEEKEND TRACK AND FIELD MEET FOLLOWED.

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NOV 31 INDEXED - 90

EX-108

NOT RECORDED
191 SEP 6 1956

67 SEP 20 1956

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